

Recognition and Prevention of Workplace Violence



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Purpose



■ To give you...

An overview of the indicators to identify a potential for workplace violence

The actions and tools available to help prevent the escalation of problems to the level of workplace violence, and

An understanding of how we deal with potential and actual workplace violence

Workplace Violence Is...



- Any verbal threat to harm another person or destroy property
- Any actual physical aggression
- Any behavior which would be interpreted by a reasonable person as potentially violent
- Any harassment which makes others feel unsafe, which could include sexual harassment

Identifying Problem Situations





- Direct or veiled threats
- Numerous conflicts with others
- Inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Inappropriate references to guns
- Fascination with incidents of workplace violence

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Identifying Problem Situations



- Statements indicating approval of the use of violence or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, work, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Extreme changes in behaviors

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Warning signs are present in 84% of workplace violence episodes involving disgruntled employees.





Contributing factors that may precipitate problematic behavior:



- Understaffing that leads to job overload or compulsory overtime
- Frustrations arising from poorly defined job tasks and responsibilities
- Downsizing or reorganization
- Labor disputes and poor-management relations

Workplace Negativity & Stress





- Poor management styles
 - Examples: arbitrary or unexplained orders; overmonitoring; corrections or reprimands in front of other employees, inconsistent discipline
- A lack of employee counseling
- A high injury rate or frequent grievances may be clues to problem situations in a workplace
- Disciplinary actions, including termination

Possible Domestic Abuse



If The Employee:

- Has unexplained bruises
- Has trouble concentrating
- Receives repeated and, upsetting telephone calls during the day
- ✓ Frequently appears anxious, upset, or depressed
- Quality of work fluctuates for no apparent reason
- ✓ Misses work often

Procedure for Reporting Incidents





Recognize early warning signs and effectively intervene. The Employee Assistance Program is an appropriate resource for helping to prevent problems from escalating.



Address problem behaviors promptly.



Report unacceptable behavior to a supervisor, manager, the Employee Relations Office, Protective Services, or any member of the Threat Assessment Advisory Group.



Call 911 for all emergencies.

Threat Assessment Advisory Group





- Has the responsibility to investigate the situation, analyze the risk, and determine effective management of the situation
- Group members from the: Office of Human Capital, Office of Center Operations, Office of the Chief Counsel, and other representatives, as needed, such as supervisors
- The Group meets at least once a month

Dealing With Potentially Violent People

Guidelines:

- The most important initial consideration is to remain calm if at all possible.
- Potentially violent individuals may have difficulty controlling their feelings/behavior, or may use the threat of violence as a tool to obtain their goal.
- Uncontrolled demonstrations of anxiety may antagonize either of these dynamics.
- It is imperative to avoid anything that might threaten or provoke a potentially violent person.
- Behavior construed as threatening or demeaning will complicate any attempted resolution, and may elicit overt aggression.
- The goal should always be to defuse a potentially violent situation by an empathic and non-threatening approach.

Guidelines (continued)



- An employer may be firm in his position and still be empathic and understanding. A "tough" approach is not likely to deescalate a potentially violent situation, and in fact is more likely to bring it about.
- The threatening person should always be treated with respect and dignity, even if the natural inclination is to denigrate the person.
- Acknowledgement of the person's frustration and anger and expressions that the problem can be resolved will engage the person in dialog.
- Requests for the person's input on how the situation can be remedied will focus the person on alternatives to violence.
- Genuine dialog, without artificiality or contrivance, will legitimize the discussion and diffuse any underlying rage.

For more information, contact:

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Protective Services Practices





It is standard MSFC procedure to have a member of Protective Services present for a Civil Service disciplinary action

Protective Services also offers this service to Contractors

Protective Services Procedures



- MSFC has an established, trained and exercised response procedure. The procedure has been updated based on lessons learned from the JSC incident.
- ➤ In the event of a 911 call, officers respond in 2-4 minutes and call in additional support as needed.
- ➤ The electronic warning system (loudspeaker) is one means of announcing appropriate actions for employees in a potentially violent situation. Among possible instructions are Shelter In Place or Building evacuation.
- Law enforcement response to situations on MSFC is authorized. Procedures to coordinate other support as necessary are routinely practiced.

What Can You Do?

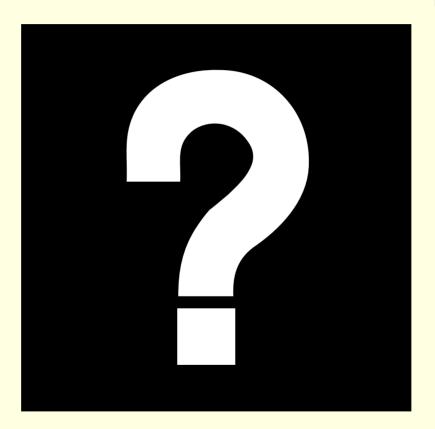


Call 911 if you feel threatened in your workplace.



- Safeguard your badge and do not allow piggybacking. In the event of an emergency, the badge reader data will be used to identify who has entered a building.
- Be proactive about addressing warning signs.
 Many potential situations are resolvable before they turn violent.
- Use the Employee Assistance Program and the Threat Assessment Advisory Group to help work through potential problems.





For more information contact the Protective Services Community Resource Office.

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